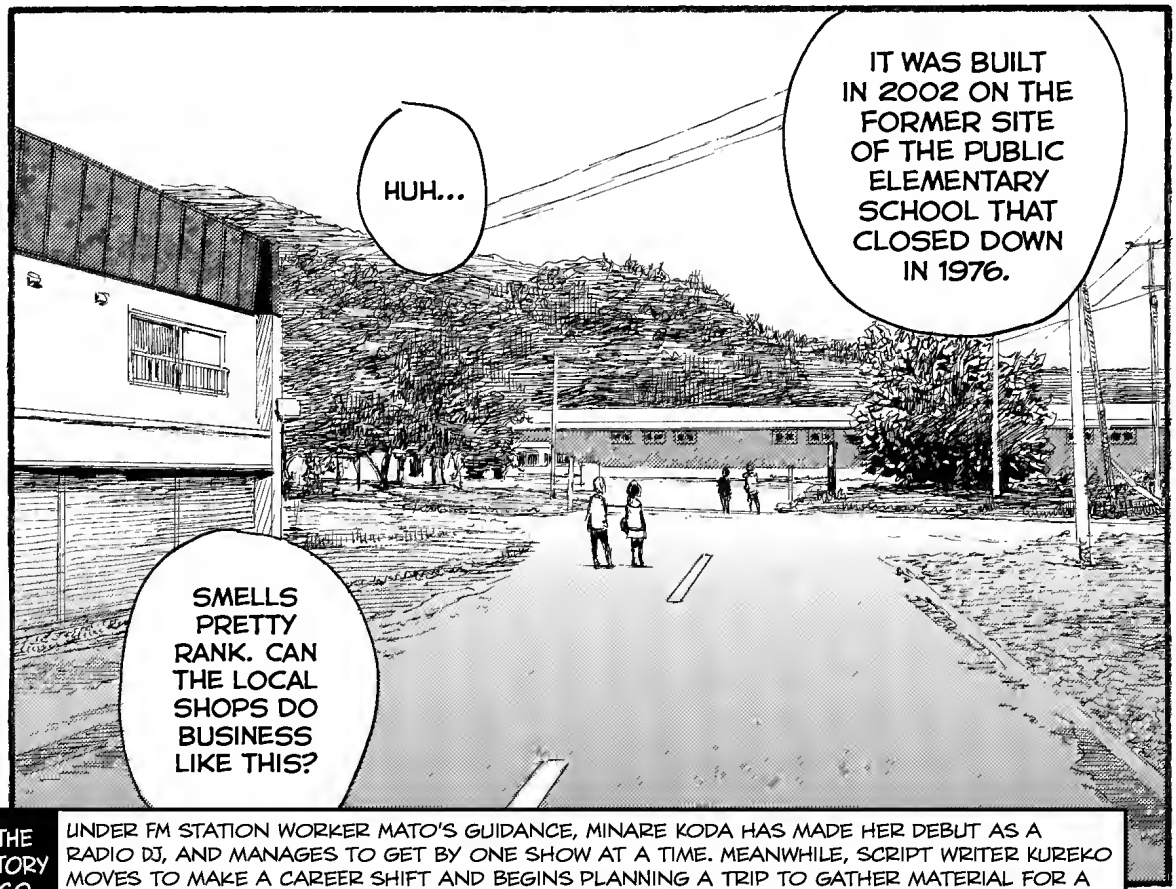
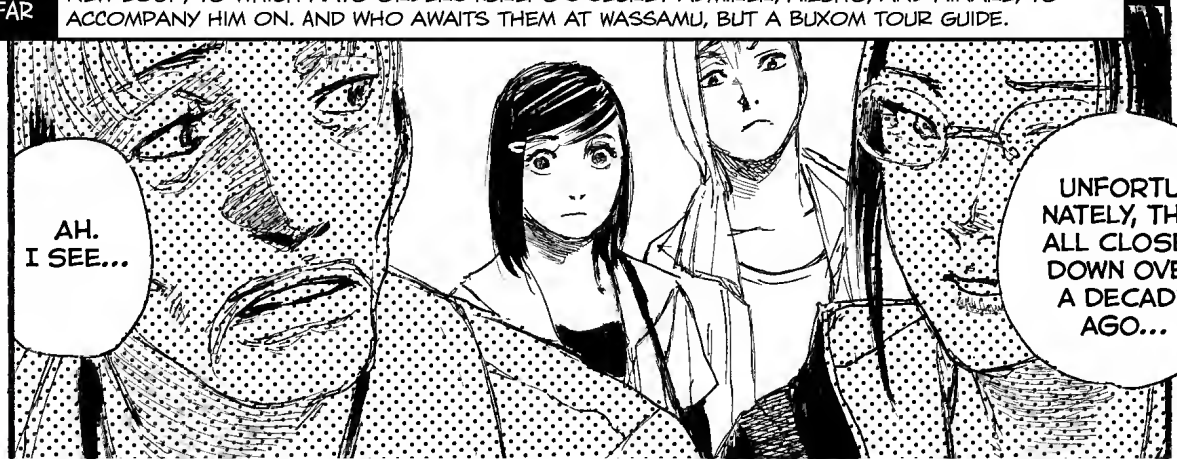
34
wave
LISTEN TO ME!
HIROAKI SAMURA
KC
KODANSHA COMICS

HIROAKI
SAMURA
Chapter 34 "I DON'T WANT TO BE FOOLED."
wave
LISTEN TO ME!


IT WAS BUILT IN 2002 ON THE FORMER SITE OF THE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THAT CLOSED DOWN IN 1976.
HUH...
SMELLS PRETTY RANK. CAN THE LOCAL SHOPS DO BUSINESS LIKE THIS?

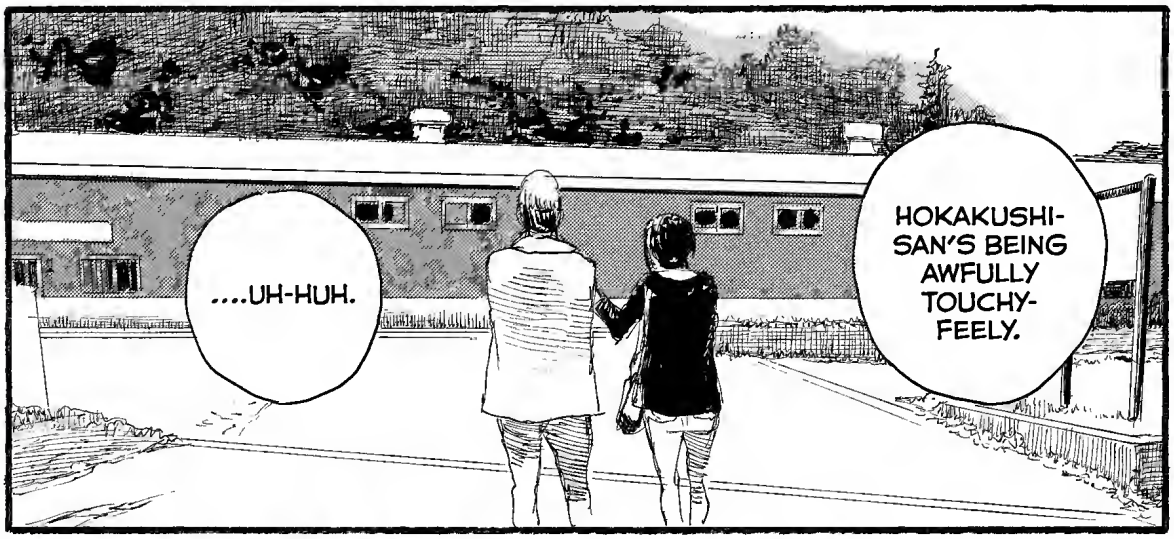
THE STORY SO FAR

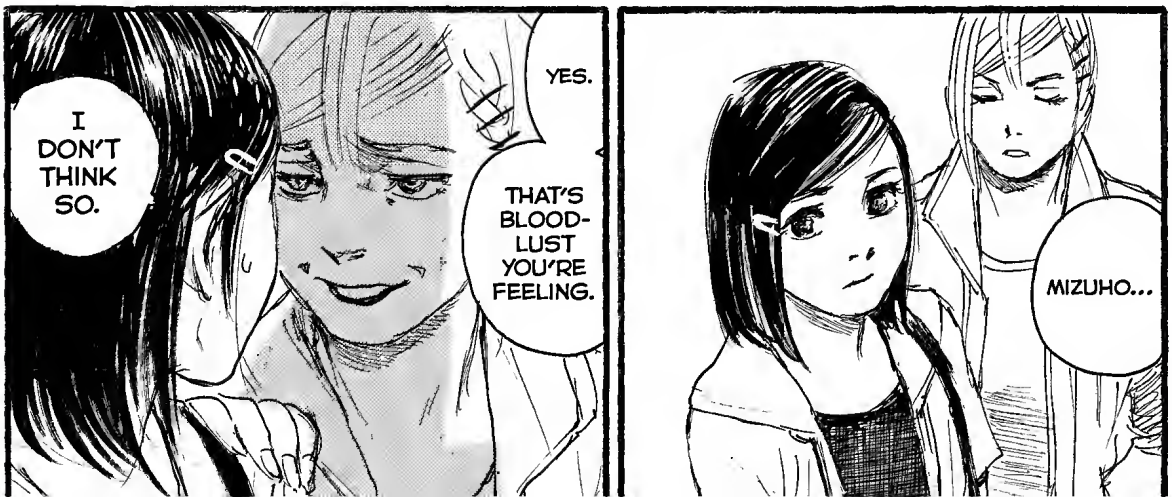
UNDER FM STATION WORKER MATO'S GUIDANCE, MINARE KODA HAS MADE HER DEBUT AS A RADIO DJ, AND MANAGES TO GET BY ONE SHOW AT A TIME. MEANWHILE, SCRIPT WRITER KUREKO MOVES TO MAKE A CAREER SHIFT AND BEGINS PLANNING A TRIP TO GATHER MATERIAL FOR A NEW BOOK, TO WHICH MATO ORDERS KUREKO'S SECRET ADMIRER, MIZUHO, AND MINARE, TO ACCOMPANY HIM ON. AND WHO AWAITS THEM AT WASSAMU, BUT A BUXOM TOUR GUIDE.



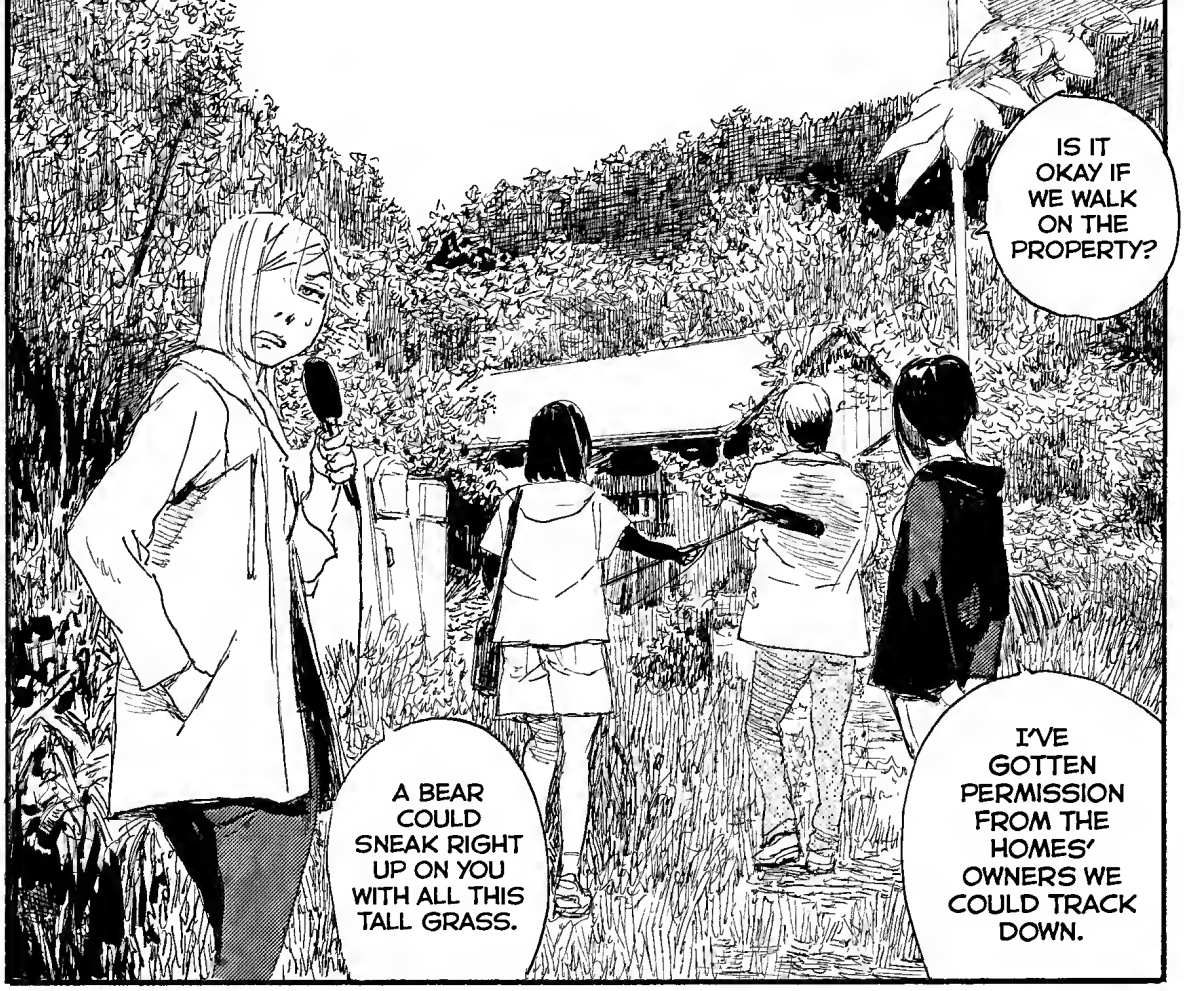
*THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. ANY RESEMBLANCES TO REAL PEOPLE OR GROUPS IS PURELY COINCIDENTAL.

CAN'T SAY I KNOW HOW IT FEELS,
BUT I WONDER WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE YOUR OLD SCHOOL VANISH WITHOUT A TRACE.
MY FATHER GRADUATED FROM THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HERE.
I DON'T THINK HE HAD ANY STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT IT.
YOUR DAD SOUNDS LIKE A DRY GUY.
ACTUALLY, DO YOU THINK I COULD INTERVIEW HIM ABOUT LIFE BACK THEN?
ABSOLUTELY. I'M SURE HE'D LOVE TO TALK TO YOU.

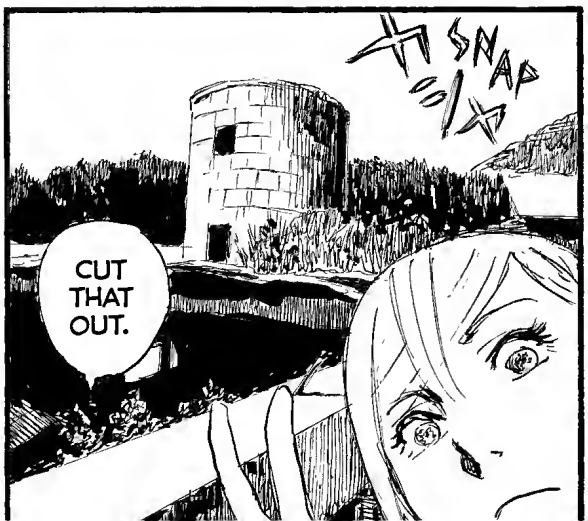

HOKAKUSHI-SAN'S BEING AWFULLY TOUCHY-FEELY.
....UH-HUH.

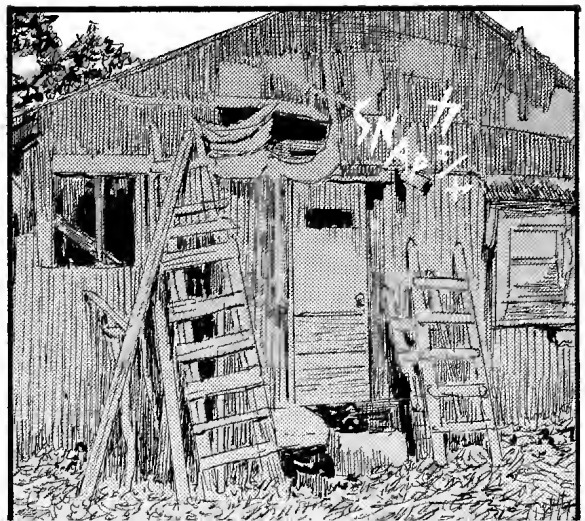

MIZUHO...
YES.
THAT'S BLOOD-LUST YOU'RE FEELING.
I DON'T THINK SO.

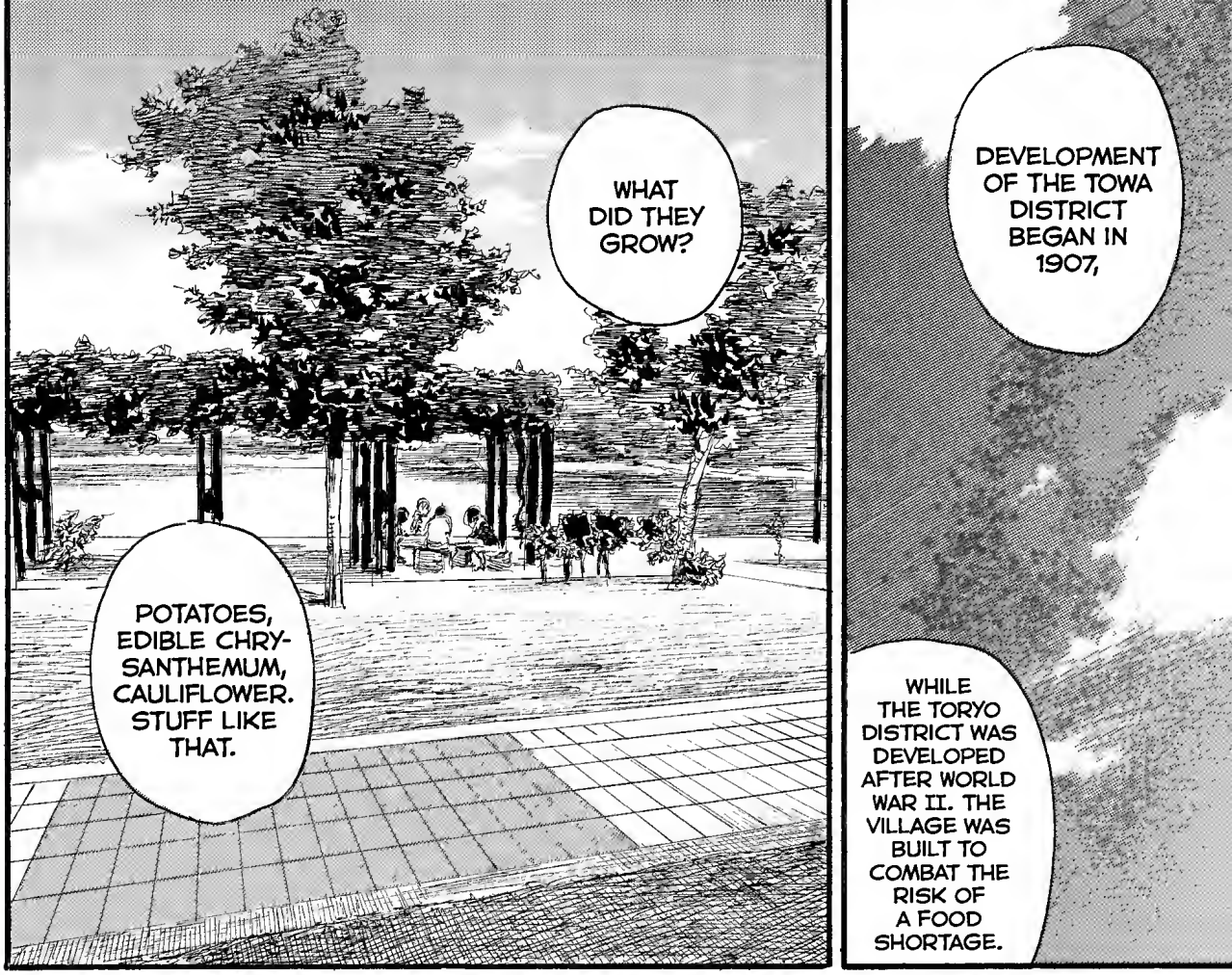
O-OKAY!
BRING ALONG THE RE-CORDING EQUIPMENT IF YOU WANT.
I'M THINKING OF HEADING INTO THE MOUNTAINS TO SNAP THE ABANDONED HOUSES.
NANBA, KODA.
CLUNK
CLICK
CLICK
WHAT IS THIS, AN OLYMPIAN MEDIA SCRUM?


IS IT OKAY IF WE WALK ON THE PROPERTY?
I'VE GOTTEN PERMISSION FROM THE HOMES' OWNERS WE COULD TRACK DOWN.
A BEAR COULD SNEAK RIGHT UP ON YOU WITH ALL THIS TALL GRASS.

LOOK, MINARE-SAN. A GROUP OF BUTTERFLIES ARE DRINKING WATER FROM A BARREL.
SNAP
NEAT.


SNAP
CUT THAT OUT.


SNAP

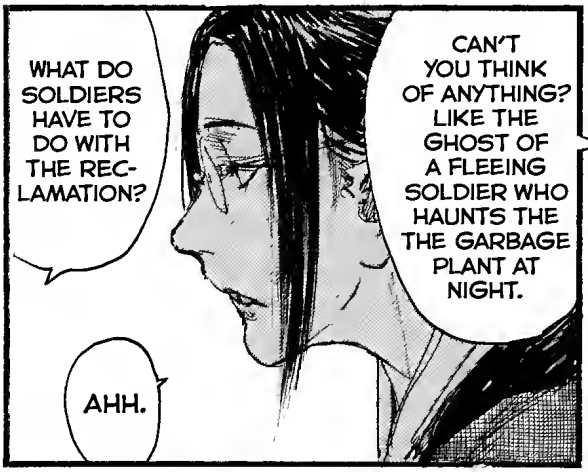

DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWA DISTRICT BEGAN IN 1907,
WHILE THE TORYO DISTRICT WAS DEVELOPED AFTER WORLD WAR II. THE VILLAGE WAS BUILT TO COMBAT THE RISK OF A FOOD SHORTAGE.
WHAT DID THEY GROW?
POTATOES, EDIBLE CHRYSANTHEMUM, CAULIFLOWER. STUFF LIKE THAT.

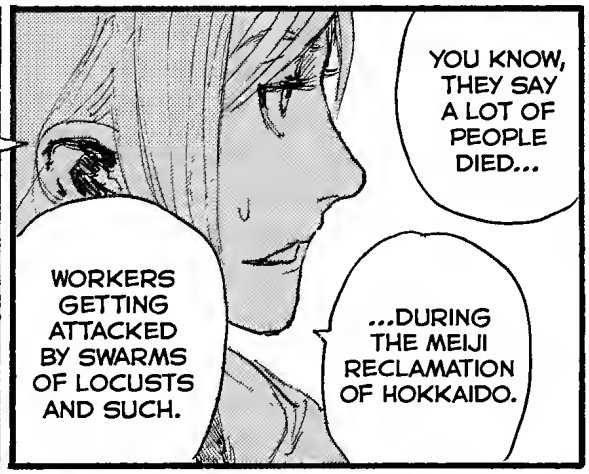
WHAT'S WRONG, MINARE-SAN?

ABOUT HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE STILL LIVING HERE?
ONLY THREE FAMILIES IN TOWA. TORYO IS NOW CATEGORIZED AS AN ABANDONED VILLAGE.

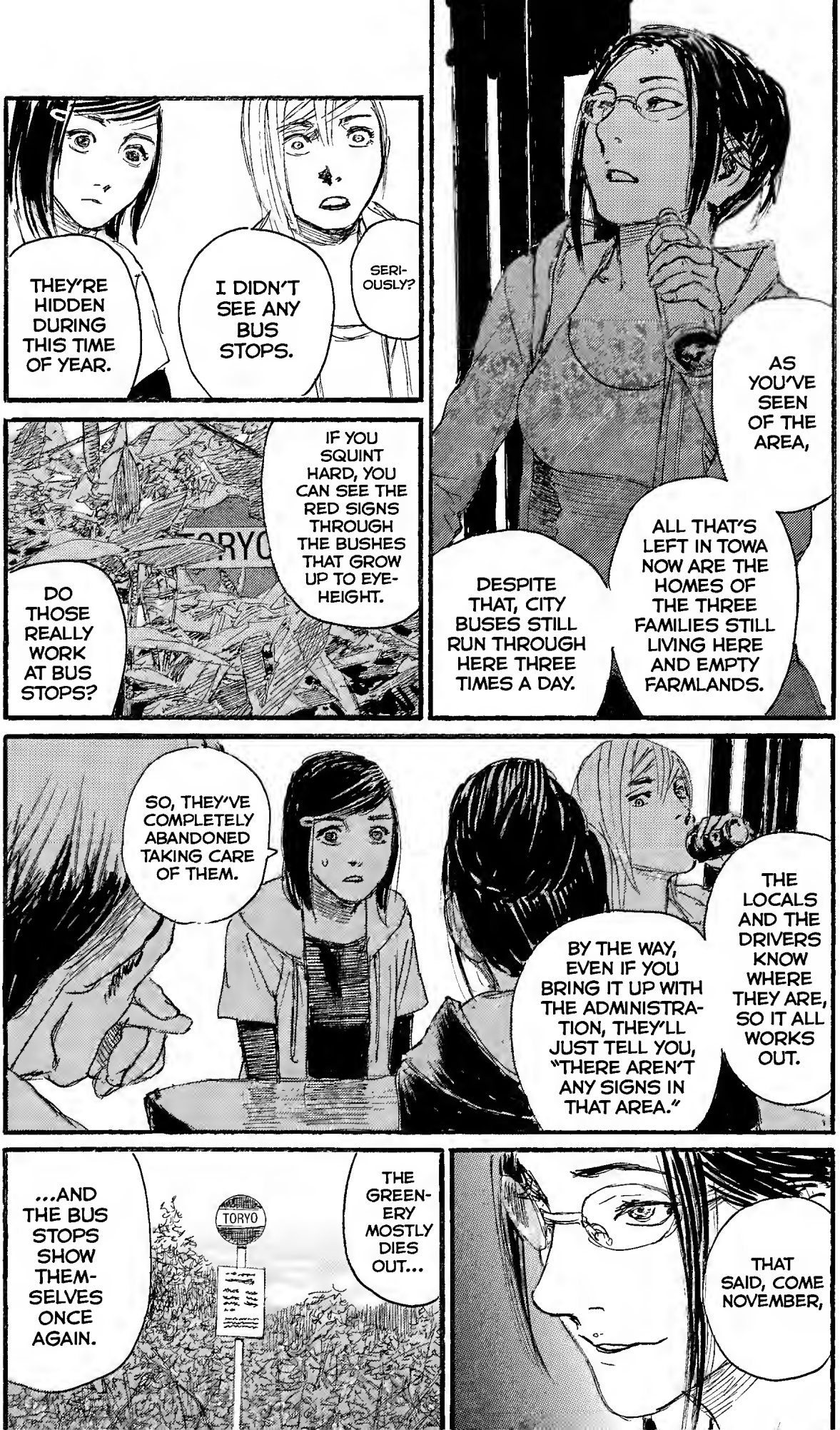
CHIK

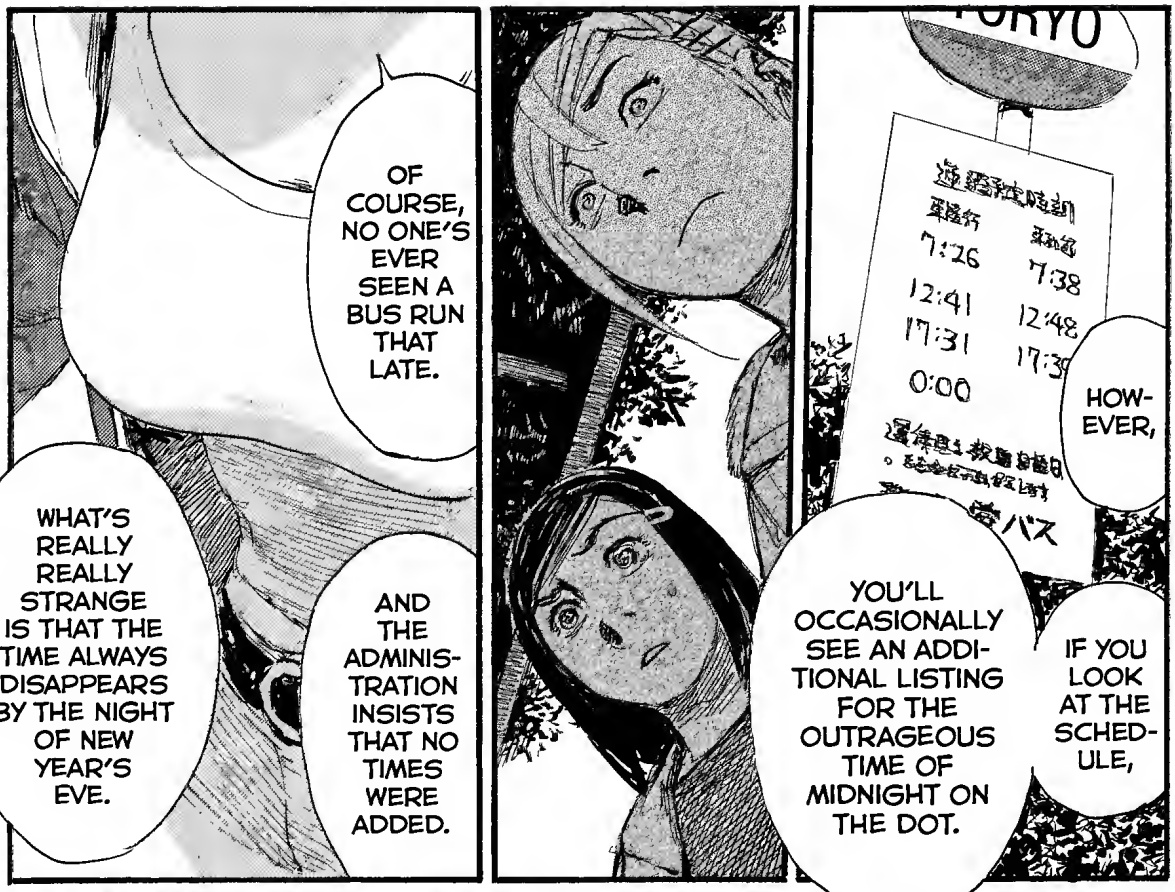
ARE THERE ANY GHOST STORIES FROM AROUND THESE PARTS, HOKAKUSHI-SAN?
?
HUH?

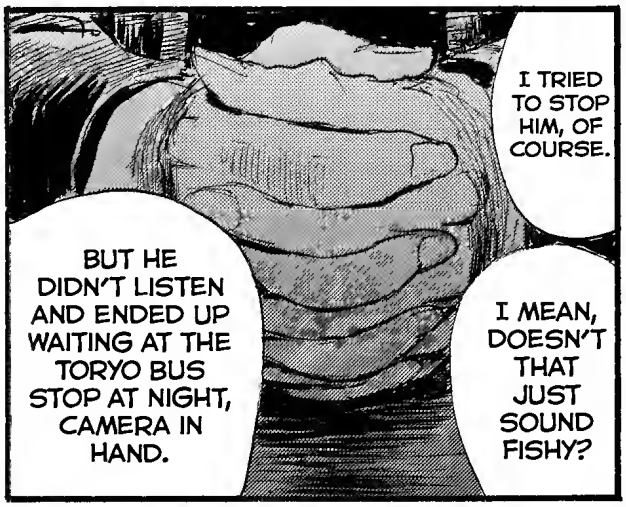

WHAT DO SOLDIERS HAVE TO DO WITH THE REC-LAMATION?
CAN'T YOU THINK OF ANYTHING? LIKE THE GHOST OF A FLEEING SOLDIER WHO HAUNTS THE THE GARBAGE PLANT AT NIGHT.
AHH.

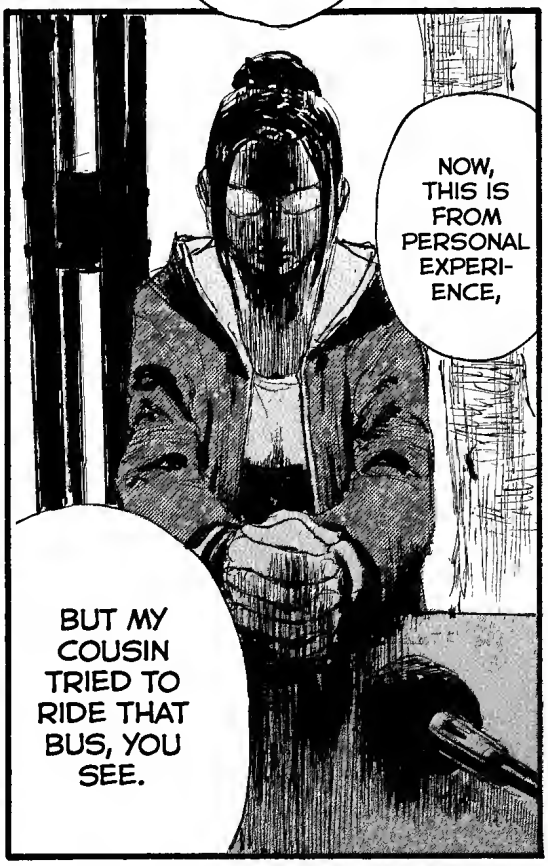

YOU KNOW, THEY SAY A LOT OF PEOPLE DIED...
...DURING THE MEIJI RECLAMATION OF HOKKAIDO.
WORKERS GETTING ATTACKED BY SWARMS OF LOCUSTS AND SUCH.

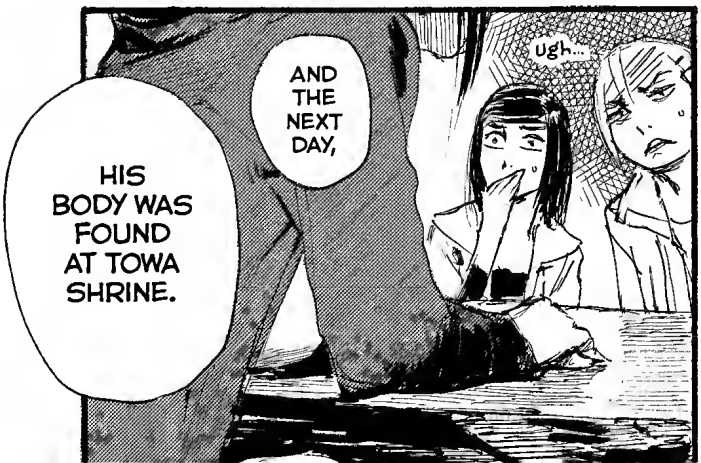
WELL, THERE IS AN URBAN LEGEND CALLED "THE NOVEMBER BUS STOP."
"DO-HO"
URBAN?!
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S PUSHING IT?
WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO START SOMETHING?

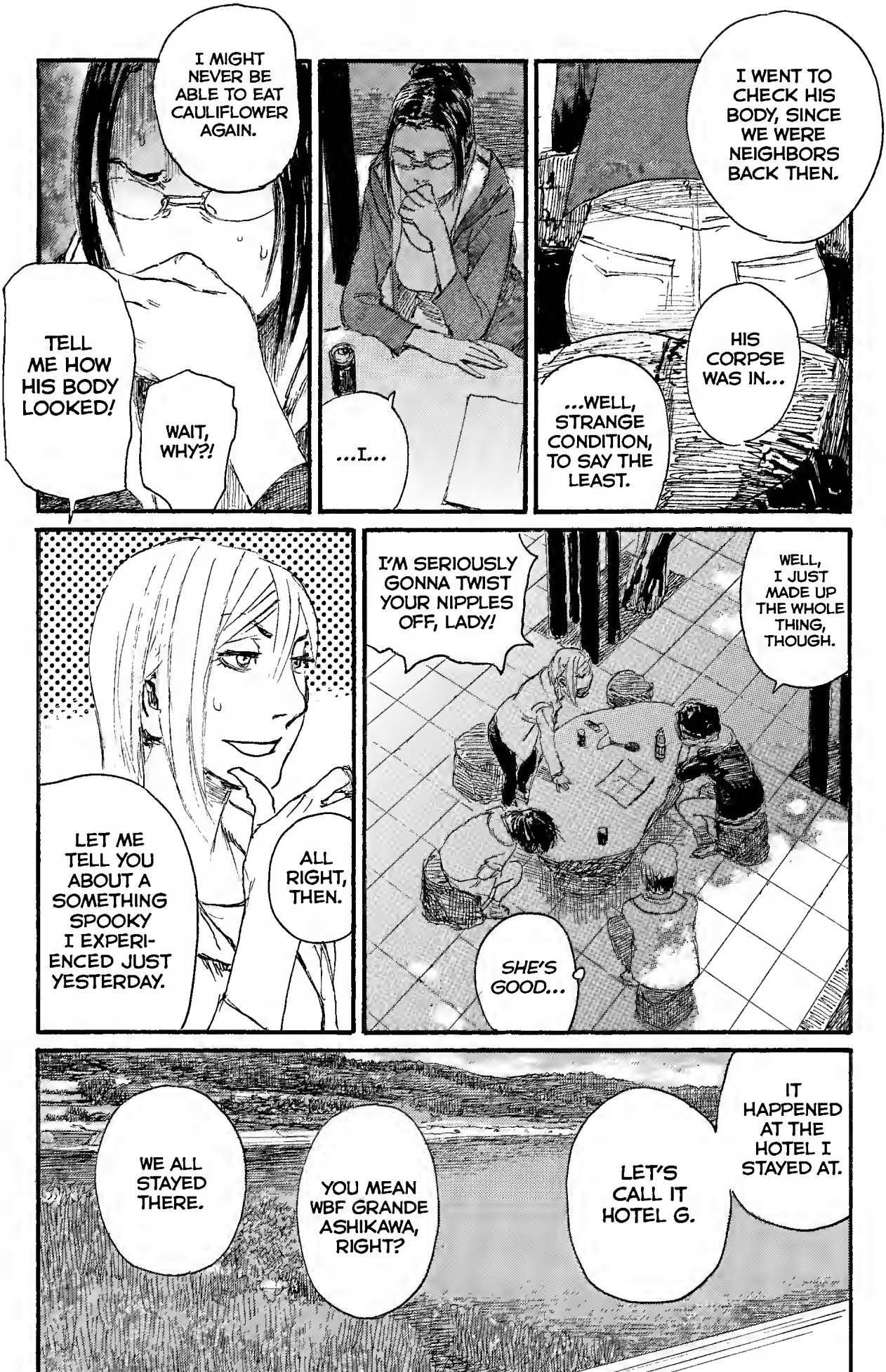

AS YOU'VE SEEN OF THE AREA,
ALL THAT'S LEFT IN TOWA NOW ARE THE HOMES OF THE THREE FAMILIES STILL LIVING HERE AND EMPTY FARMLANDS.
DESPITE THAT, CITY BUSES STILL RUN THROUGH HERE THREE TIMES A DAY.
SERI-OUSLY?
I DIDN'T SEE ANY BUS STOPS.
THEY'RE HIDDEN DURING THIS TIME OF YEAR.
IF YOU SQUINT HARD, YOU CAN SEE THE RED SIGNS THROUGH THE BUSHES THAT GROW UP TO EYE-HEIGHT.
DO THOSE REALLY WORK AT BUS STOPS?
THE LOCALS AND THE DRIVERS KNOW WHERE THEY ARE, SO IT ALL WORKS OUT.
BY THE WAY, EVEN IF YOU BRING IT UP WITH THE ADMINISTRA-TION, THEY'LL JUST TELL YOU, "THERE AREN'T ANY SIGNS IN THAT AREA."
SO, THEY'VE COMPLETELY ABANDONED TAKING CARE OF THEM.
THAT SAID, COME NOVEMBER,
THE GREEN-ERY MOSTLY DIES OUT...
TORYO
...AND THE BUS STOPS SHOW THEM-SELVES ONCE AGAIN.


OF COURSE, NO ONE'S EVER SEEN A BUS RUN THAT LATE.
AND THE ADMINISTRATION INSISTS THAT NO TIMES WERE ADDED.
WHAT'S REALLY REALLY STRANGE IS THAT THE TIME ALWAYS DISAPPEARS BY THE NIGHT OF NEW YEAR'S EVE.
HOWEVER,
IF YOU LOOK AT THE SCHEDULE,
YOU'LL OCCASIONALLY SEE AN ADDITIONAL LISTING FOR THE OUTRAGEOUS TIME OF MIDNIGHT ON THE DOT.
7:26
7:38
12:41
12:48
17:31
0:00


I TRIED TO STOP HIM, OF COURSE.
I MEAN, DOESN'T THAT JUST SOUND FISHY?
BUT HE DIDN'T LISTEN AND ENDED UP WAITING AT THE TORYO BUS STOP AT NIGHT, CAMERA IN HAND.

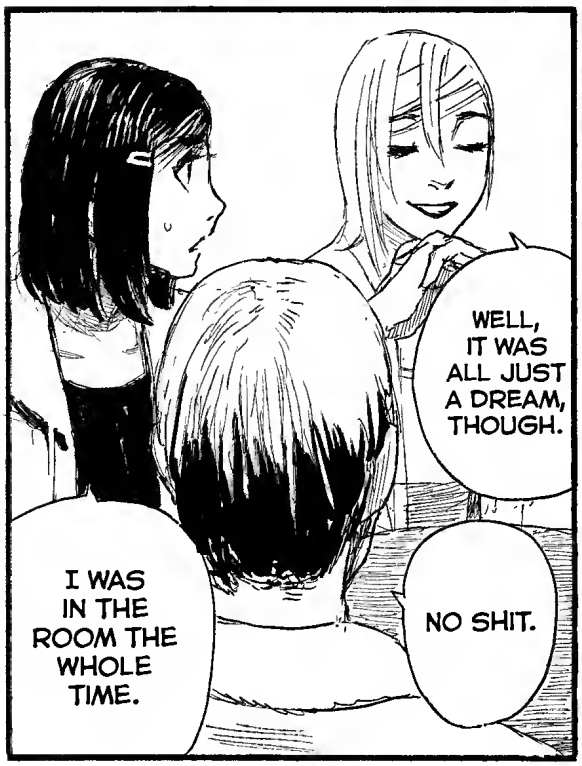

NOW, THIS IS FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE,
BUT MY COUSIN TRIED TO RIDE THAT BUS, YOU SEE.


Ugh...
AND THE NEXT DAY,
HIS BODY WAS FOUND AT TOWA SHRINE.


I MIGHT NEVER BE ABLE TO EAT CAULIFLOWER AGAIN.
TELL ME HOW HIS BODY LOOKED!
WAIT, WHY?!
...I...
I WENT TO CHECK HIS BODY, SINCE WE WERE NEIGHBORS BACK THEN.
HIS CORPSE WAS IN...
...WELL, STRANGE CONDITION, TO SAY THE LEAST.
LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT A SOMETHING SPOOKY I EXPERI-ENCED JUST YESTERDAY.
ALL RIGHT, THEN.
I'M SERIOUSLY GONNA TWIST YOUR NIPPLES OFF, LADY!
WELL, I JUST MADE UP THE WHOLE THING, THOUGH.
SHE'S GOOD...
WE ALL STAYED THERE.
YOU MEAN WBF GRANDE ASHIKAWA, RIGHT?
LET'S CALL IT HOTEL G.
IT HAPPENED AT THE HOTEL I STAYED AT.

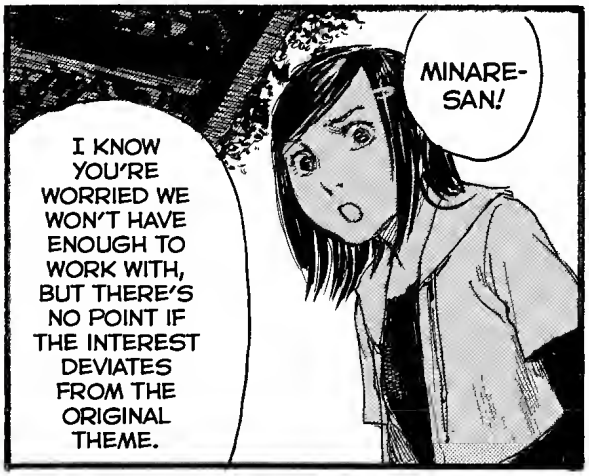
WELL, WHEN I WENT TO LOWER THE HEAT AFTER I GOT OUT OF THE BATH,
YOU KNOW HOW THE THERMO-STAT...
ON THE LCD DISPLAY...
...USES A PANEL ON THE WALL, RIGHT?
HEAT
DEAD IN BED
I LOOKED OVER TO THE BED, AND WHAT DO I SEE?
THEN, WHILE SCRATCH-ING MY HEAD,
"DEAD IN BED"?
IS THAT SOME KINDA MORBID NEW SETTING?

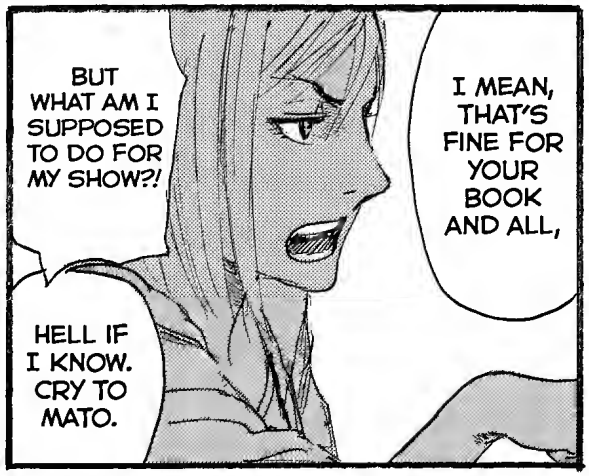
A MAN LYING DEAD ON TOP OF IT.
KYAAAH!
AND LOOKING CLOSELY,


WELL, IT WAS ALL JUST A DREAM, THOUGH.
NO SHIT.
I WAS IN THE ROOM THE WHOLE TIME.

I SAW THAT IT WAS NONE OTHER THAN SANSHIRO'S* OWN HIRONOBU KOMIYA.
*SANSHIRO: A JAPANESE COMEDY DUO.

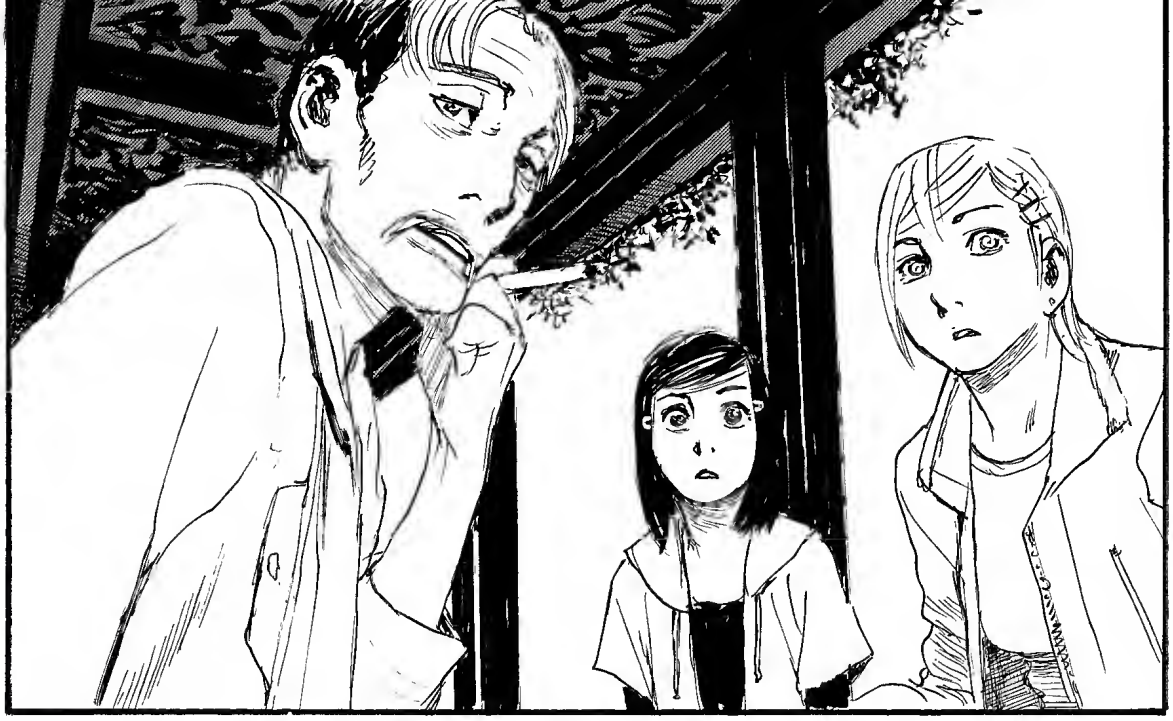
BUT Y'KNOW, GATHERING MATERIAL ON DEPOPULATED VILLAGES IS PROVING TO BE MORE BORING THAN I IMAGINED.
WHAT *WERE* YOU EXPECTING?
I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH FOOTAGE WE'LL BE ABLE TO USE.

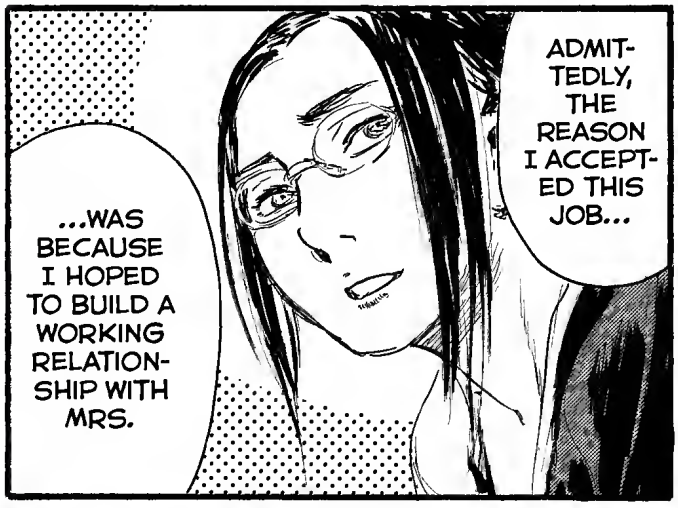

MINARE-SAN!
I KNOW YOU'RE WORRIED WE WON'T HAVE ENOUGH TO WORK WITH, BUT THERE'S NO POINT IF THE INTEREST DEVIATES FROM THE ORIGINAL THEME.


I MEAN, THAT'S FINE FOR YOUR BOOK AND ALL,
BUT WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO FOR MY SHOW?!
HELL IF I KNOW. CRY TO MATO.

AS SOON AS I STARTED TALKING, I THOUGHT, "DO *ANY* SHOWS LIKE THAT EXIST?"
DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE ASKING FOR A BIT MUCH?
HONESTLY, YES...
MIZUHO...
ISN'T THAT WHAT MAKES TOP-CLASS RADIO JOURNALISM?!
EVEN IF WE'RE IN AN UNDER-POPULATED REGION WITH-OUT ANY SIGNS OF LIFE AND NO ACCESS TO VIDEO,
WE HAVE TO MAKE A REPORT THAT'LL ENTICE THE LISTENERS USING ONLY AUDIO!

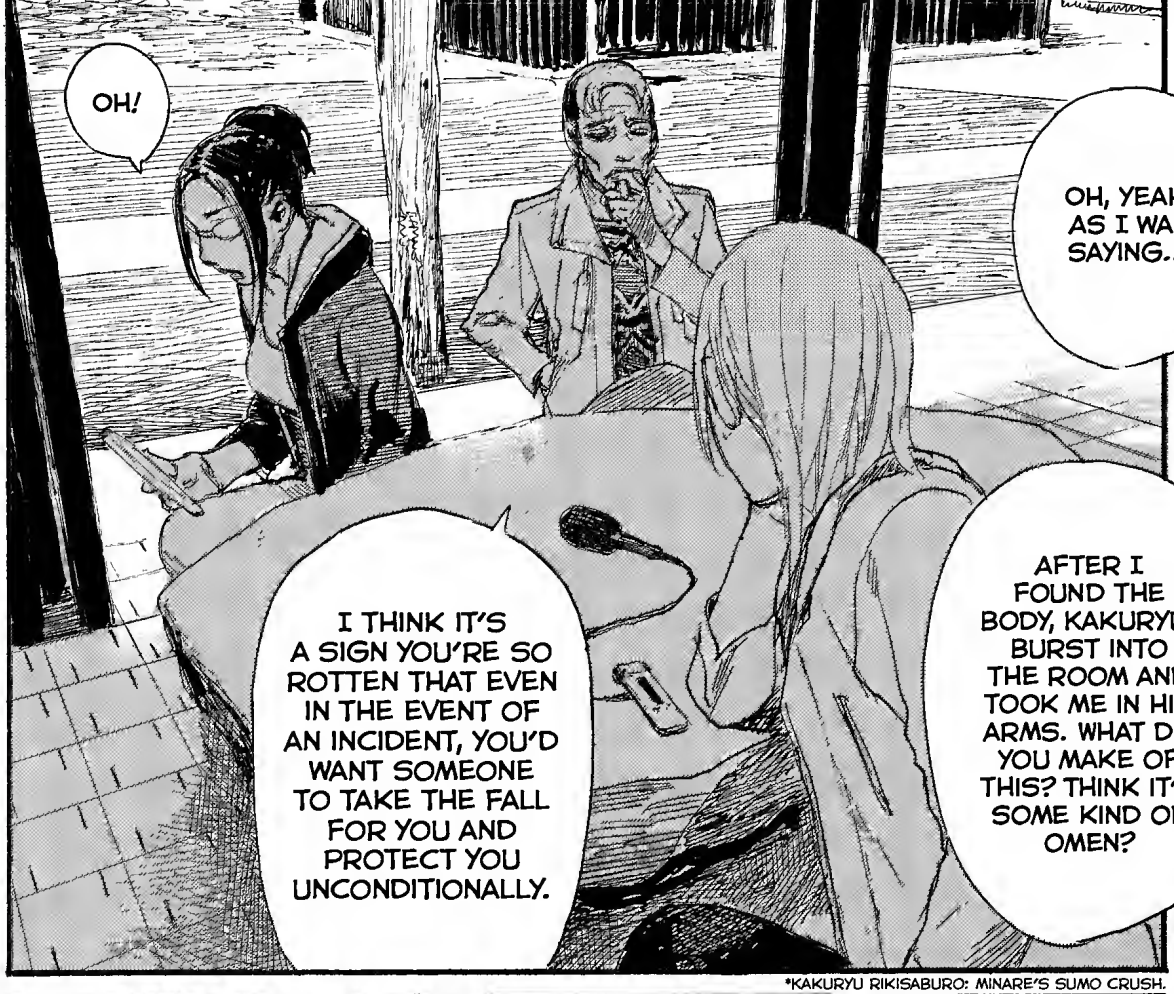
I THINK IT'S A DECENT IDEA.
BY STARTING WITH A GHOST STORY ABOUT WASSAMU,
YOU CAN SET A PRETEXT TO TRANSITION INTO YOUR OWN STORY.
AFTER ALL, DON'T RADIO LISTENERS...
...USUALLY HOPE THAT THE HOST WILL GO OFF THE RAILS EVENTUALLY?
I'VE WORKED WITH A HOST WHO WOULD CAREFULLY TUNE HIS GUESTS' TANGENTS, AND BOY...
HE WAS SO ANAL ABOUT EVERYTHING AND WOULD SAY, "BUT WE'RE GETTING AWAY FROM THE TOPIC," IF THINGS DIGRESSED EVEN A LITTLE BIT.
IT TAKES THE FUN OUT OF EVERYTHING WHEN YOU REALIZE THE SHOW WILL NEVER EXCEED YOUR EXPECTATIONS.



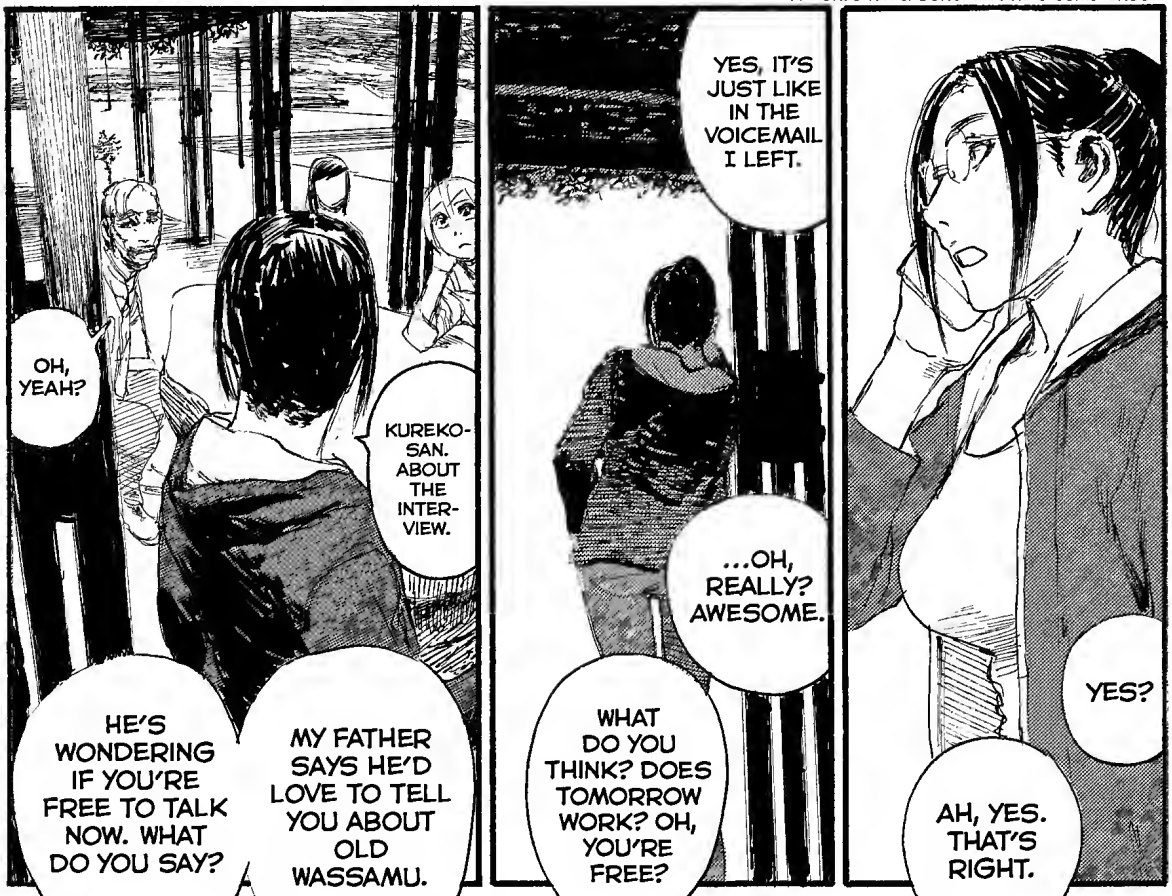

ADMIT-
TEDLY,
THE
REASON
I ACCEPT-
ED THIS
JOB...
...WAS
BECAUSE
I HOPED
TO BUILD A
WORKING
RELATION-
SHIP WITH
MRS.

...DO YOU
WORK IN
BROAD-
CASTING?
YES. I'M
THE HEAD
OF PR
AT OUR
COMPANY.
I'VE HAD THE
PLEASURE OF
WORKING WITH
MANY MEDIA
OUTLETS.

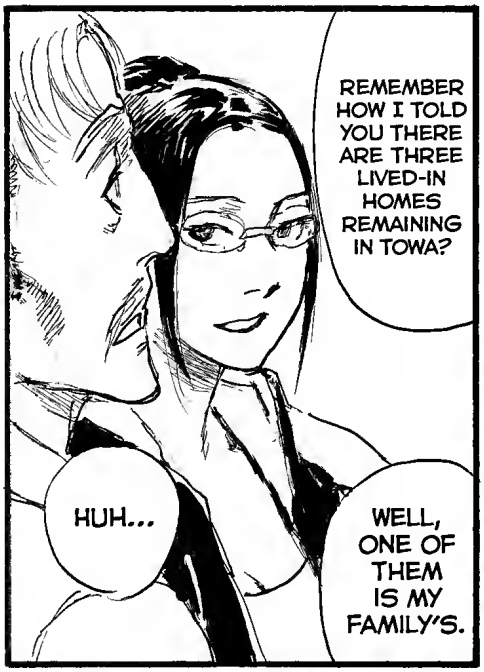
WHY
DIDN'T
YOU
SAY SO
SOONER?
I'LL
INTRODUCE
YOU TO A
FIRST-RATE
DIRECTOR AND
PRODUCER
LATER.
THANK YOU
VERY MUCH.
SORRY, IT KIND
OF FEELS LIKE
I'M RUSHING
THINGS
ALONG.
TOO BAD
HE'S AN OLD,
BORDERLINE
CRIMINAL
WHO TRICKED
AN UNSUS-
PECTING
WOMAN AND
DRAGGED
HER INTO THE
INDUSTRY.


OH!
OH, YEAH. AS I WAS SAYING...
I THINK IT'S A SIGN YOU'RE SO ROTTEN THAT EVEN IN THE EVENT OF AN INCIDENT, YOU'D WANT SOMEONE TO TAKE THE FALL FOR YOU AND PROTECT YOU UNCONDITIONALLY.
AFTER I FOUND THE BODY, KAKURYU* BURST INTO THE ROOM AND TOOK ME IN HIS ARMS. WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS? THINK IT'S SOME KIND OF OMEN?

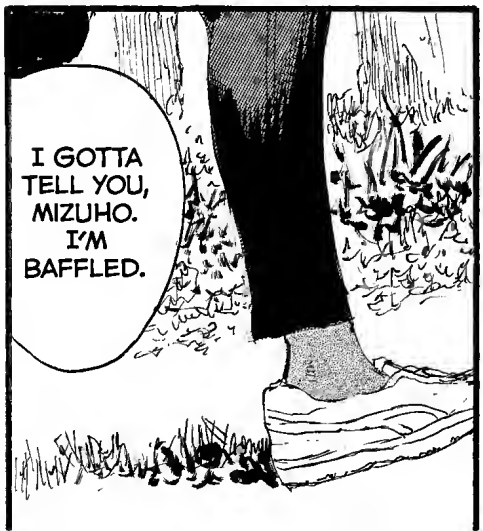
*KAKURYU RIKISABURO: MINARE'S SUMO CRUSH.


OH, YEAH?
KUREKO-SAN. ABOUT THE INTER-VIEW.
HE'S WONDERING IF YOU'RE FREE TO TALK NOW. WHAT DO YOU SAY?
MY FATHER SAYS HE'D LOVE TO TELL YOU ABOUT OLD WASSAMU.
YES, IT'S JUST LIKE IN THE VOICEMAIL I LEFT.
...OH, REALLY? AWESOME.
WHAT DO YOU THINK? DOES TOMORROW WORK? OH, YOU'RE FREE?
YES?
AH, YES. THAT'S RIGHT.

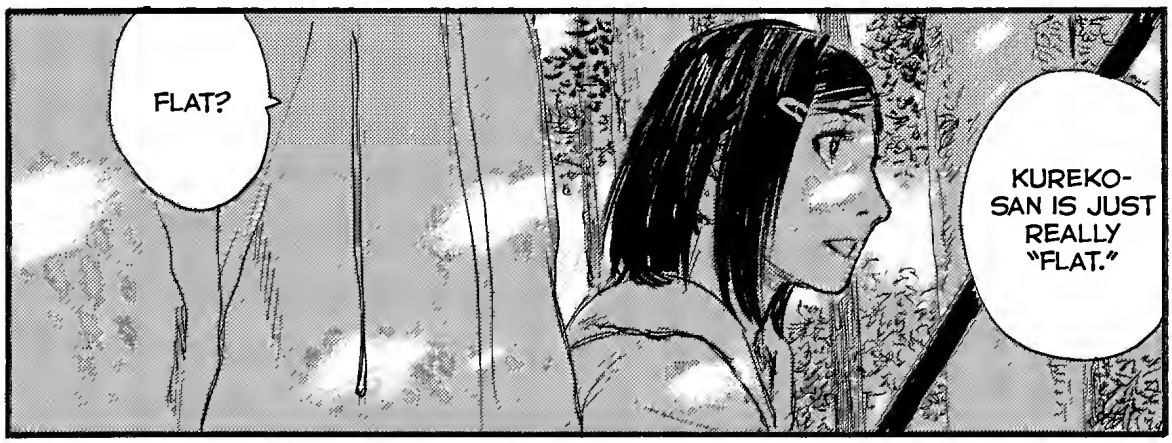
ALL RIGHT.
SURE, WHY NOT? I'LL GLADLY TAKE HIM UP ON THE OFFER.
YEAH. WE'LL HEAD OVER THERE NOW... OKAY, SEE YOU IN 20.


REMEMBER HOW I TOLD YOU THERE ARE THREE LIVED-IN HOMES REMAINING IN TOWA?
HUH...
WELL, ONE OF THEM IS MY FAMILY'S.

SORRY, WE HAVE TO HIKE FROM HERE.
OH, NO WORRIES.
HE LIVES PRETTY DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS, HUH?

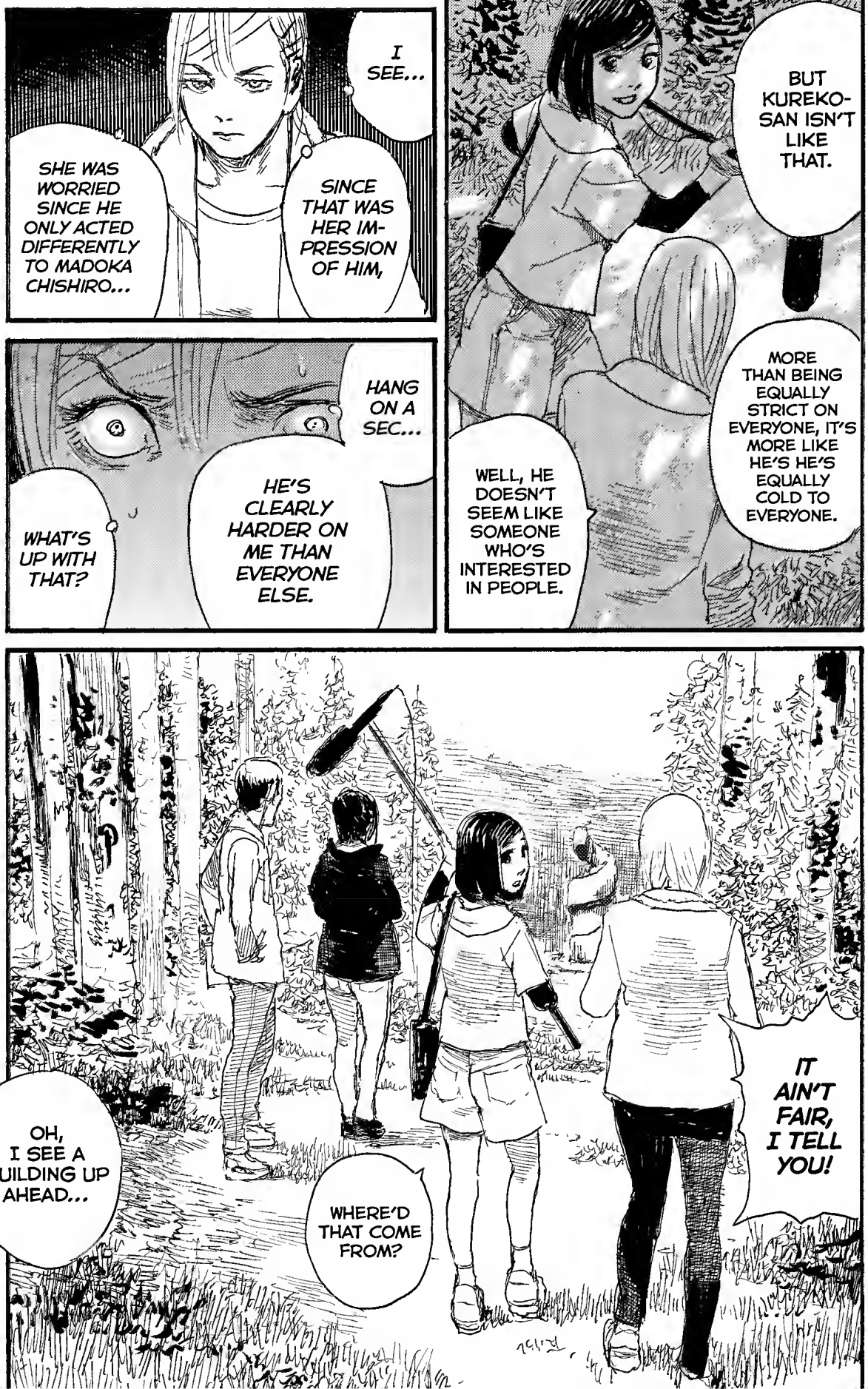

I GOTTA TELL YOU, MIZUHO. I'M BAFFLED.

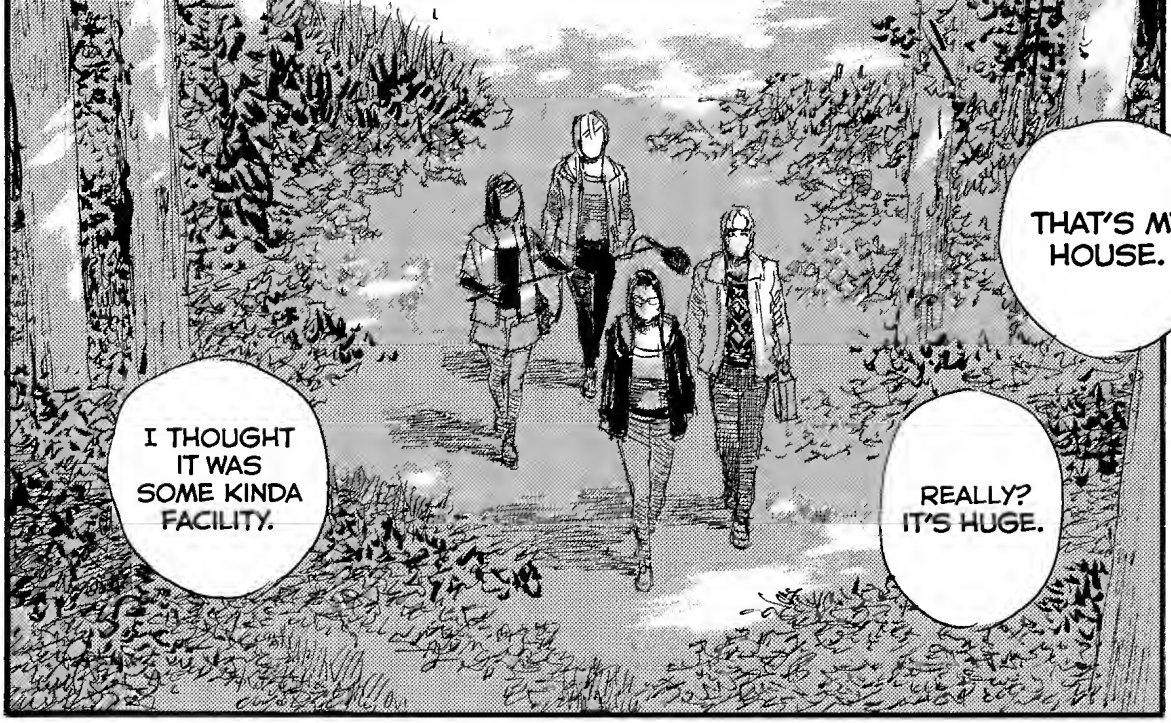
THE WORLD'S FULL OF MYSTERIES,
IN MY HEAD, IT'S UP THERE WITH THE MYSTERY OF THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK.
ONE OF THEM BEING THAT KUREKO-SAN IS SOMEHOW POPULAR WITH THE LADIES.
I CAN SEE WHY HE WOULD BE.
WELL, SURE, *YOU* CAN...
Are we really gonna need the shotgun mic?

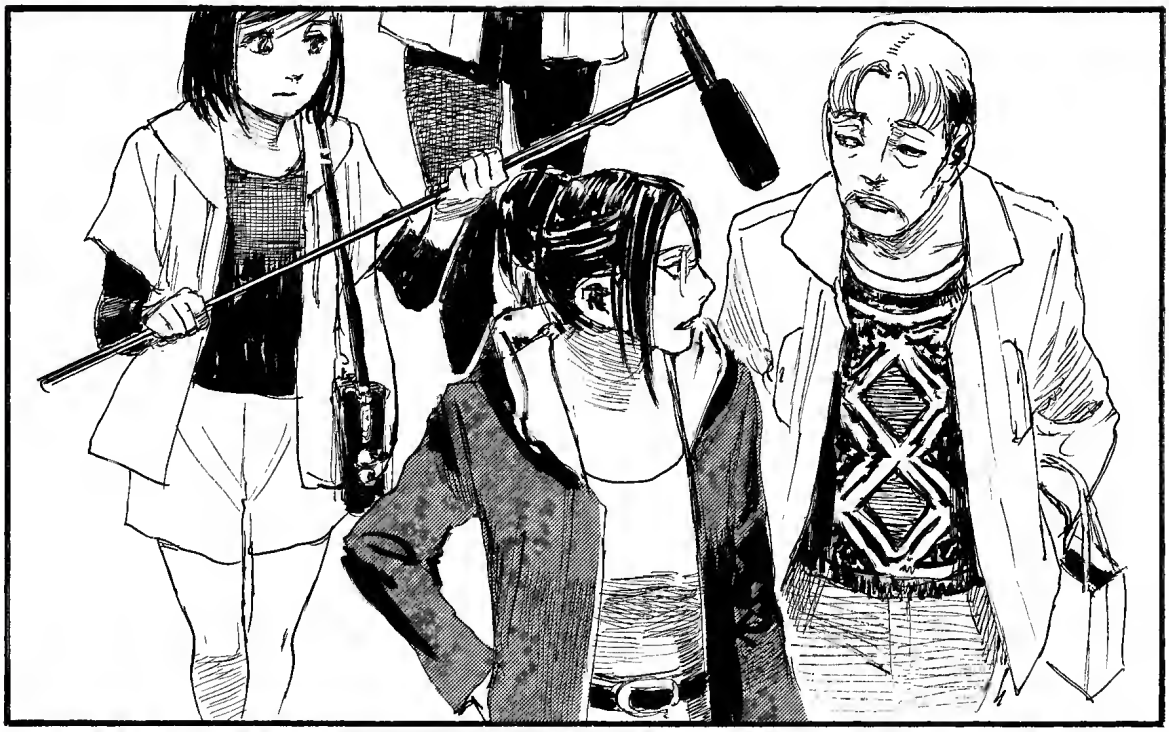

KUREKO-SAN IS JUST REALLY "FLAT."
FLAT?

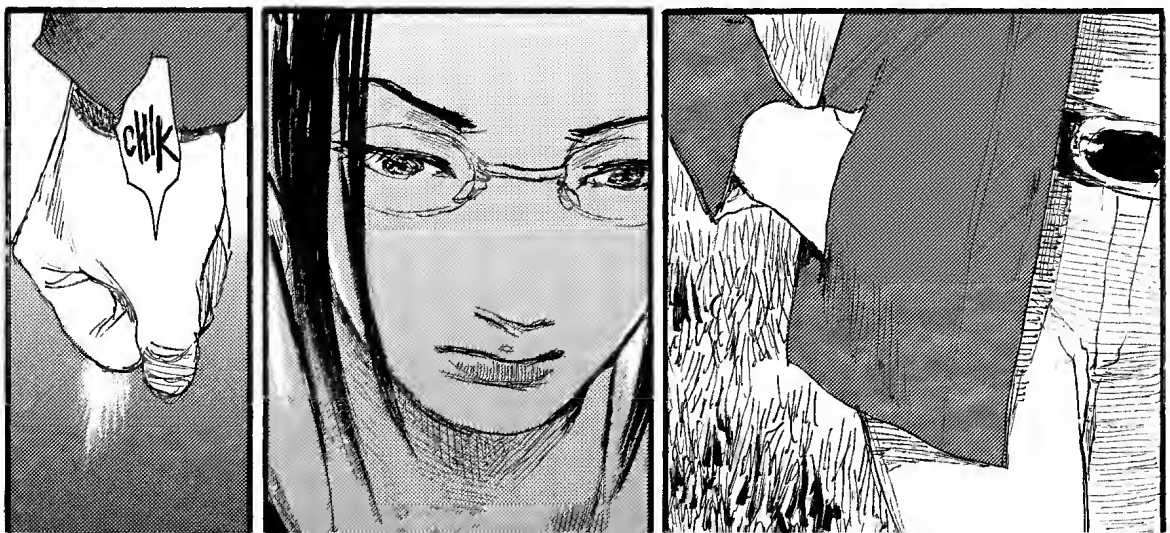
I MEAN, IT'S MY FAULT PEOPLE TAKE ME LIGHTLY, BUT DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S FRUS-TRATING?
THEY GET TAKEN LIGHTLY, HIT ON...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE AT OTHER STATIONS,
BUT IT FEELS LIKE YOUNG FEMALE EMPLOYEES TEND TO GET TREATED A LOT MORE DELICATELY THAN THEIR MALE CO-WORKERS.


I SEE...
SHE WAS WORRIED SINCE HE ONLY ACTED DIFFERENTLY TO MADOKA CHISHIRO...
SINCE THAT WAS HER IMPRESSION OF HIM,
BUT KUREKO-SAN ISN'T LIKE THAT.
MORE THAN BEING EQUALLY STRICT ON EVERYONE, IT'S MORE LIKE HE'S HE'S EQUALLY COLD TO EVERYONE.
WELL, HE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE SOMEONE WHO'S INTERESTED IN PEOPLE.
HANG ON A SEC...
WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?
HE'S CLEARLY HARDER ON ME THAN EVERYONE ELSE.
IT AIN'T FAIR, I TELL YOU!
WHERE'D THAT COME FROM?
OH, I SEE A BUILDING UP AHEAD...


I THOUGHT IT WAS SOME KINDA FACILITY.
REALLY? IT'S HUGE.
THAT'S MY HOUSE.




CHIK

ALL RIGHT, MRS.
LET'S GET SOME GOOD WORK DONE.

HEY, DAD.
I'VE CAPTURED THEM.
I'M ON MY WAY BACK NOW.